

9-2012

## September 2012

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CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY  
SAN BERNARDINO

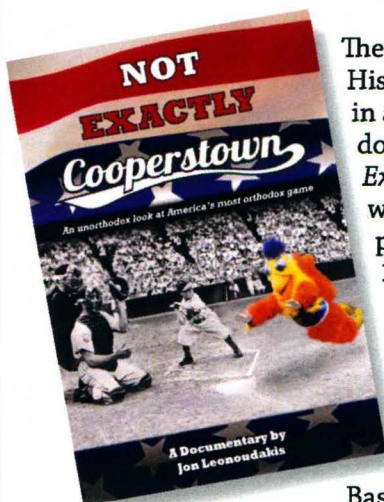
John M. Pfau Library

# LATINO BASEBALL HISTORY PROJECT:

NEWSLETTER



## 'Barrio Baseball' Highlighted in the New Documentary, *Not Exactly Cooperstown*



The Latino Baseball History Project is featured in a segment of the documentary film, *Not Exactly Cooperstown*, which had its world premiere on Aug. 19, at the Pasadena Central Library, Pasadena, Calif. The first documentary to explore the eclectic, fan-based think tank known as the

Baseball Reliquary, the 69-minute *Not Exactly Cooperstown* was

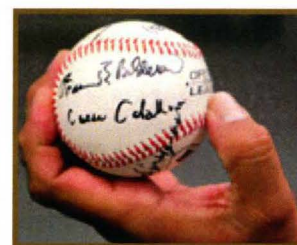
produced and directed by Jon Leonoudakis, who describes the film as "a star-spangled journey into the heart and soul of baseball" and "an unorthodox look at America's most orthodox game."

"In 2002, I went to an amazing alternative baseball Hall of Fame ceremony where fans could actually vote for candidates," said Leonoudakis. "An outfit called the Baseball Reliquary staged the event, and was inducting 'Shoeless' Joe Jackson, Mark 'The Bird' Fidrych, and Minnie Minoso, 'The Cuban Comet.' Minoso hung out, signed autographs, and talked baseball with attendees. Awards were given out to fans, researchers, and historians for extraordinary service. The event was free and offered peanuts and crackerjack as refreshments. I found myself surrounded by people who love the game with a fervor matching my own. Not only was I back in the fold, but my love for the game went another 400

miles into the stratosphere."

"The reliquary's approach to the game is very different. It loves baseball hopelessly, but not reverentially. It's a non-profit and has no ties to Major League Baseball, which allows it to present content without political concerns. The reliquary is a peripatetic virtual museum without a brick-and-mortar home, run by people who are steeped in the arts and operate it as a grass-roots, anti-establishment affair," says Leonoudakis.

Among the many subjects covered in the film is the Baseball Reliquary's role in launching the initiative, "Mexican-American Baseball in Los Angeles: From the Barrios to the Big Leagues," at California State University, Los Angeles, which eventually morphed into the Latino Baseball History Project. Terry Cannon, founder and executive director of the Baseball Reliquary, recalls the origins of the project dating back to 1986 when he became fascinated with the subject of Mexican



### Book Signings Huge

Success .....	Pg 2
2012 Annual Reunion....	Pg 3
Cal Poly Pomona Ethnic and Women's Studies to Salute Mexican Americans Who Played Military Baseball .....	Pg 4
Mitla Cafe 66ers Event..	Pg 5
LBHP Announces the Release of its 3rd Book..	Pg 6
LBHP Seeking Photos for its 4th Book .....	Pg 6
They Played This Game, Baseball .....	Pg 7

**Continued on Page 5**

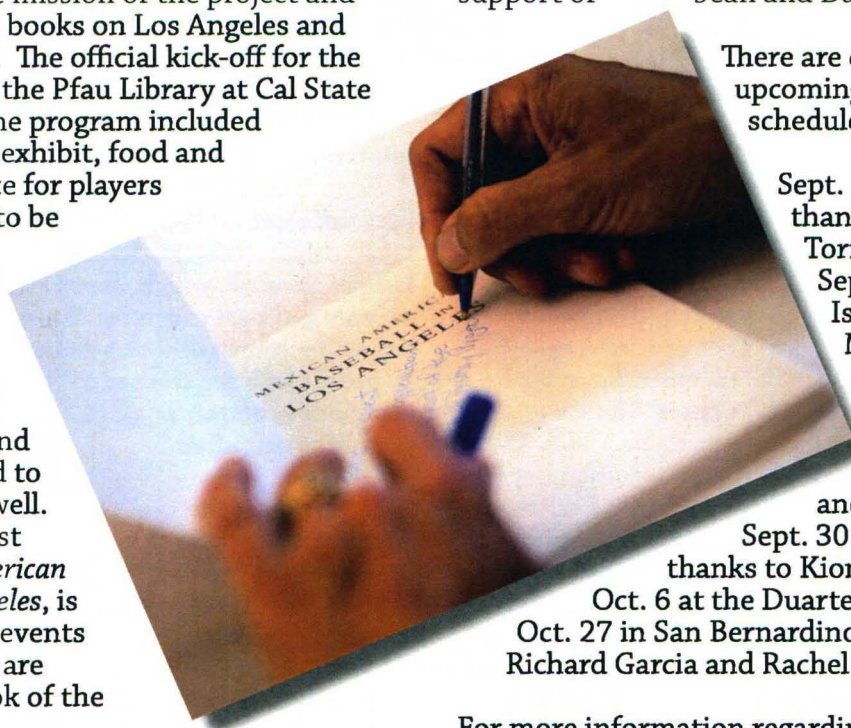


## Book Signing Events Huge Success for the IE Book

*Mexican American Baseball in the Inland Empire* has been a huge success for the Latino Baseball History Project due to the tremendous support from the community to promote and purchase the book. The book was released in early May of 2012. Sal Valdivia Jr., his family, and the community of Beaumont sponsored the first book signing event at the closing ceremonies of their local youth baseball/softball teams on May 19. Members of the project spoke to the audience about the mission of the project and about the first two books on Los Angeles and the Inland Empire. The official kick-off for the book took place at the Pfau Library at Cal State San Bernardino. The program included speakers, a library exhibit, food and music, and a chance for players and their families to be acknowledged. At all of the book signings, the project invites players and their families to attend to share baseball and softball stories and to sign the books as well. In addition, the first book, *Mexican American Baseball in Los Angeles*, is sold at all of these events since many people are collecting each book of the series.

In June, four book signing events were sponsored: in Pomona on June 3, thanks to the fine efforts of Alice Gomez and the Pomona Historical Society; in Claremont on June 16, thanks to the support of Al Villanueva celebrating the centennial of the Claremont Mexican American community; in Alhambra on June 24 at the home of Richard and Teresa Santillan; and in Pomona on June 30 at the home of Tommie and Barbara Encinas. The month of July witnessed book signings in Corona where 200 people attended due to the hard work of Richard Cortez and Carlos Uribe; in Modesto/Riverbank on July 14 thanks to the tireless work of Phyllis Perez; at the El Monte Public Library

on July 21 with the incredible help of Lucy and Hank Pedregon; and in Rancho Cucamonga on July 29 at the home of Anthony and Rita Vasquez, whose entire family went out of their way to make the event a memorable one for everyone. On Aug. 4, a book signing event was part of the 4th Annual Latino Baseball History Project Reunion on the campus of Cal State San Bernardino, and on Aug. 19, a book signing was held in Newport Beach thanks to the generous support of Jean and Dan Ardell.



There are currently several upcoming book signings scheduled:

Sept. 15 in San Jose, thanks to Gabe dela Torre;

Sept. 22 on Catalina Island, thanks to Marcelino Saucedo and Lolo Saldana;

Sept. 29 in East Los Angeles, thanks to Jaime and Lupita Longoria;

Sept. 30 in Carpinteria, thanks to Kiona Gross;

Oct. 6 at the Duarte Book Fair,  
Oct. 27 in San Bernardino, thanks to Richard Garcia and Rachel Smith

For more information regarding these upcoming book events, please email Richard Santillan at [rsantillan@earthlink.net](mailto:rsantillan@earthlink.net). The Latino Baseball History Project is working right now with several communities to sponsor future book signing events for October, November and early December. If your community or organization would like to sponsor a book signing event, please contact Richard Santillan at [rsantillan@earthlink.net](mailto:rsantillan@earthlink.net) and 626-284-4957.

*Finally, a big THANK YOU to the library staff at the Pfau Library at CSUSB for their precious time and physical energy setting up the book signing tables at these events.*



# The 2012 Latino Baseball History Project Annual Reunion

By Jill Vassilakos-Long

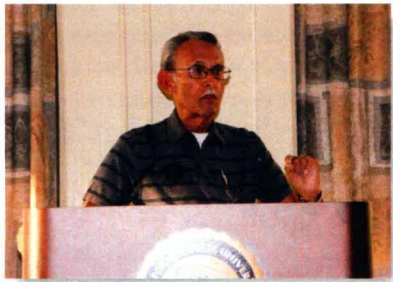
On Aug 1, California State University, San Bernardino hosted the 4th Annual Latino Baseball History Reunion. Once again the players, their families, and their fans gathered together to celebrate and to remember the history of Latino baseball in southern California.

Richard Santillan spoke about the history of Mexican-American baseball. He thanked those present who had donated photographs and stories to the archives to help create the books, then invited them to come up to the podium and share their stories. The floodgates were opened! Players shared memories of games, of players, even of political action that helped create a baseball field in a local community.



**Monica DeCasas Patterson and Jose G. Felipe**

The love of baseball as a family legacy from one generation to the next, was a major part of the story told that night. Jose G. Felipe and his granddaughter, Monica, came up to tell stories of the Placentia Merchants and his time in baseball. Anna Duarte had brought her father, Teyo's uniform. When Tony Martinez saw it he told a story about her dad! It seems that Teyo was a power hitter, and at one game the pitcher decided to walk him. The pitcher kept throwing pitches far to the outside. Finally Teyo leaned way out over the plate and stretched ... and whacked that ball out of the park!



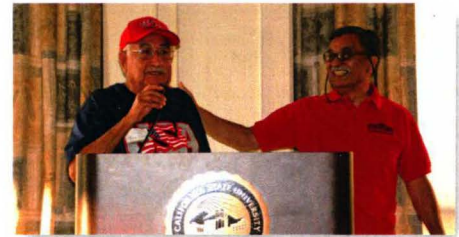
**Joe Mujica of East Highland**



**Charlotte Sauter and her son Gene. Charlotte spoke to the crowd about her time as a player.**

Joe Mujica knows how to work with local government to get a ball park! Land had been left, earmarked for use by the players, but before it was developed as a ball park, the city of East Highlands broke the ground to put in a grocery store. Joe was one of the players who met with city leaders and proved to them that the land had been intended as a ball park. The players worked with the city to identify an alternate site and the city helped landscape it so that it would be a first class venue. It is now used by baseball and softball teams every weekend!

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**Dr. Richard Santillan turning the podium over to Tom Perez.**



**Tony Martinez and Anna Duarte with Teyo Duarte's jersey**



**Mario Montecino brought his father's uniform to share**

**Many thanks to everyone who came and we hope to see YOU at the next Latino Baseball History Reunion!**



# Cal Poly Pomona Ethnic and Women's Studies Department to Salute Mexican Americans Who Played Military Baseball



*Ernie Ceruantes playing for the Navy's baseball team at Pearl Harbor after World War II (Courtesy of Ernie Rodriguez)*

The Ethnic and Women Studies Department at Cal Poly Pomona is saluting Mexican American men and women who played ball in the armed forces, especially during World War II and Korea. There are several events currently being planned for the summer of 2013. First, a library exhibit will showcase photos and other items documenting the long and rich history of Mexican-American service persons defending both their country

and entertaining troops by playing baseball and softball. The exhibit will be on display for the summer months of July, August and early September. Second, there will be a luncheon to honor these extraordinary individuals, and to present them or their family members with a special certificate from the Latino Baseball History Project. Third, there will a panel discussion where these players or family members will share memorable stories about baseball and military service. Finally, the players or family members will participate in a first pitch ceremony on campus.



*The National Guard Armory in Pomona in 1933. Frank Layas is front row third from left. (Courtesy of Cindy Swartland)*

The Ethnic and Women Studies (EWS) Department sponsored a similar event in 2011 to pay tribute to outstanding players from Los Angeles and the Pomona Valley. In spring of 2012, the EWS Department honored Mexican American women who played softball between the 1930s and 1950s. Nineteen women plus one male manager attended the luncheon, certificate presentation, and first pitch ceremony on May 29. The EWS Department is planning in 2014 to celebrate and applaud Mexican-Americans who signed professional contracts with major league teams between the 1930s and 1960s.



*Photo taken in Germany circa 1956 Louis Jimenez is to the right. (Courtesy of Louis Jimenez)*

The Latino Baseball History Project is seeking photos and names of Mexican-American individuals who played ball in the military up until the 1960s, and photos and names of Mexican-Americans who signed contracts with major league teams up until the 1960s. For more information, please contact Dr. Richard Santillan at [rsantillan@earthlink.net](mailto:rsantillan@earthlink.net) and at 626-284-4957.



*Photo taken in England during World War II. This is a B-25 ground crew baseball team. Ramon A. Martinez is front row second from the right. (Courtesy of Rod Martinez)*



# MITLA CAFE 66ERS EVENT

by Mark Ocegueda



On Aug. 28, the Mitla Café in San Bernardino hosted a reception for Mexican American Baseball in the Inland Empire. Located in the historic barrio in San Bernardino's west side, the Mitla Café has played an integral role within San Bernardino's Mexican community since 1937 and is currently celebrating its 75th year of being in business. Members of the community packed the Mitla Café and I was honored to give a brief lecture to

the former peloteros and their families. Joe Botello, former member of the legendary 1940s Mitla Café fastpitch softball teams, attended the event and proudly displayed a 1948 Mitla Café uniform to those in attendance. Other players that were represented by either themselves or their families included Tommie Encinas, Teyo Duarte, Chevo Martinez, Cruz Nevarez, Ralph and Lin Botello, Carmen Lujan, Armida Neri Miller and Bertha Bocanegra.

After the Mitla Café reception, players relocated to San Manuel Stadium to participate in a first pitch ceremony in honor of the former Inland Empire barrio teams. The Inland Empire 66ers generously hosted a Mexican American Baseball Night for the former peloteros. First pitch participants who were invited included: Anna Duarte, Joe Mujica, Steve Martinez, Mario Castorena, Carmen Dominguez Nevarez, Bertha Bocanegra, Armida Neri Miller, Richard and Eddie Cortez, Chuck Briones, Carlos Uribe, Maury Encinas, Tommie Encinas, Ignacio Felix, Ernie Benzor, Alice Gomez, Al Villanueva, Sal Valdivia and Al Vasquez. Photographs of the former players were shown on the big screen during the middle of the fifth inning.



## *Not Exactly Cooperstown*

*Continued from Page 3*

American baseball when reading Samuel Regalado's seminal article, "Baseball in the Barrios: The Scene in East Los Angeles Since World War II."

Highlights of the Latino Baseball History Project are also documented in the film, including the dedication of the Shorty Perez memorial plaque at Belvedere Park in East Los Angeles in 2011. Cesar Caballero, Richard Santillan and Tomas Benitez are featured, discussing the origins and significance of the project to the Mexican American community. Also depicted are several of Ben Sakoguchi's Mexican American-themed orange crate label baseball paintings, photographs that are part of the LBHP's archival collection, and historic game footage of the Carmelita Chorizeros playing at Belvedere Park and Evergreen Playground.

Made for non-profit/educational purposes, *Not Exactly Cooperstown* has been entered in several film festivals, and Leonoudakis is now arranging screenings for the film. It will be shown at the South Pasadena Public Library on Thursday, Nov. 1, at 7 p.m. Anyone interested in finding out more about the film, or in arranging a screening, can contact Jon Leonoudakis at [jbgreek@earthlink.net](mailto:jbgreek@earthlink.net), or visit the film's Web site at [www.notexactlycooperstown.com](http://www.notexactlycooperstown.com).

DVDs of *Not Exactly Cooperstown* are available for purchase through the Baseball Reliquary. Anyone interested in purchasing a DVD can e-mail the Baseball Reliquary at [terymar@earthlink.net](mailto:terymar@earthlink.net) for further information.



# **Latino Baseball History Project Announces the Projected Spring 2013 Release Of Its Third Book**

Contributed by Angelina F. Veyna

*Mexican American Baseball in Orange County* celebrates the once-vibrant culture of baseball and softball teams from Anaheim, Santa Ana, Tustin, Orange, Fullerton, La Habra, Placentia, San Juan Capistrano and nearby towns. Baseball allowed men and women to showcase their athletic and leadership skills, provided families a chance to show their support, and permitted community members to develop social and political networks. Players from the barrios and colonias of La Fábrica, Campo Corona, Alta Vista, Campo Colorado, La Conga, Maple, Truslow, Delhi, Cypress Street, El Modena, La Colonia Independencia, Barrio 17th and La Jolla were able to affirm their Mexican and American identities through their sport. Such legendary teams as the Placentia Merchants, the Juveniles of La Habra, the Lionettes de Orange, the Fullerton Eastside Athletic Club, the Altes of Westminster, the Orange Tomboys and the Road Kings of Colonia 17th made weekends memorable. Many of these teams were sponsored by local businesses and churches, as well as by organizations such as the League of United Latin American Citizens. Players and their families helped create the economic backbone and wealth evident in Orange County today, whether working in the orchards and packing houses, laboring in local factories, being concerned educators, or serving our country in the military. This book sheds light on some of the forgotten and unrecognized images and stories of our Mexican American community.

Author Richard A. Santillán, professor emeritus of ethnic and women studies at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona and coauthors Susan C. Luévano, anthropology, ethnic and women's studies librarian at California State University, Long Beach; Luis Fernandez, public historian and independent scholar specializing in Orange County Mexican and Mexican-American history; and Angelina F. Veyna, professor of history and ethnic studies at Santa Ana College, serve as advisors to the Latino Baseball History Project in San Bernardino. This book is possible because of the many photos shared with the project and the countless hours donated by community members.

## **LATINO BASEBALL HISTORY PROJECT SEEKING PHOTOS FOR ITS FOURTH BOOK ON CENTRAL AND NORTHERN CALIFORNIA**



*Mexican American Baseball team in Santa Maria in 1937 (courtesy of Eddie Navarro)*

The Latino Baseball History Project is seeking baseball and softball photos for its fourth book on Central and Northern California. The deadline to submit photos is March 30, 2013. The book will be released in spring of 2014. The authors are Richard A. Santillán, Christopher Doctor, Anna Belmudez, Eddie Navarro and Alan O'Connor. Chapter one is on San Fernando Valley. Chapter two will be on Ventura County including the communities of Santa Paula, Fillmore, Ventura, Camarillo, Oxnard, Ojai and Piru. Chapter three will be on Santa Barbara County



*Mexican American team in 1940 in Sacramento (courtesy of Mexican American Sacramento Hall Of Fame)*

including the communities of Carpinteria, Santa Barbara, Santa Maria, Guadalupe, Lompoc, Pismo Beach and San Luis Obispo. Chapter four is on the Central Valley and Sacramento including the communities of Modesto, Stockton, Fresno, Tracy, Bakersfield, Visalia, Lodi, Woodland and Tulare. Another chapter will cover the San Gabriel Valley including the communities of San Gabriel, El Monte and South El Monte, Rosemead, Baldwin Park, La Puente, Azusa, Duarte and Irwindale. The project has already collected nearly 100 photos for the fourth book.



*Mexican American team in Stockton 1950's (courtesy of John Ward)*

If you have any baseball and/or softball photos from any of these communities to share with the project, please contact Dr. Richard Santillán at [rsantillan@earthlink.net](mailto:rsantillan@earthlink.net) or 626-375-9944. The time period for these photos should be between the 1900s and early 1970s. The authors are seeking all types of photos including Little League and youth ball, high school and college, semi-professional and professional, religious, women's teams, military baseball, community and business-sponsored teams, and Mexican Americans who played ball in Mexico.



*Mexican American team in Santa Paula late 1920s (courtesy of Anna Belmudez)*



# *They Played This Game, Baseball*

by Tomas Benitez

They played this game, baseball.

They played on Sundays, all day.  
They played in parks and sandlots, on fields of grass and dirt,  
They played on weekends, and school nights,  
and all year round, in the heat and the cold.

They played this game, baseball.

They played for their communities and familias,  
Vecinos cheering them on in English and Spanish,  
They played with their friends, and next to their sons.  
As soon as a boy was old enough to take the field,  
alongside a brother, a cousin, an uncle or a father.

They played their games to the music of baseball,  
The smack of a ball in an old leather glove, or the  
sound of the crack of the bat hitting a long one out.

But also, the music of mariachis, the joyous laughter  
of nearby children, families talking and dogs barking,  
The groan of car engines or distant trains going by,  
and the sound (and smells) of food cooking, all day.

They played this game, baseball.

They played in team colors or mismatched uniforms;  
And for some, three different jerseys all in a long day,  
for three different teams in three different games.

They played for the Evergreen Rangers, the Forty-Sixty Club,  
Los Tomboys de Orange County, the Colton Mercuries, The  
Corona Athletics, Eastside Beer, Ornelas Market, and the US  
Army.  
They played for the dynasty of the "New York Yankees of East  
LA",  
the Carmelita Chorizeros.

They played for Las Aztecas de Kansas City, and las Gallinas  
of East Chicago Indiana, on teams from East LA to the US/  
Mexico border, from the beginning and until now. All wom-  
ens clubs, but they played this game, too.

They played this game, baseball.

In the barrios, neighborhoods and their home towns  
For park leagues, high schools, military clubs and factory  
teams,  
they traveled, to play "those other fellows over there," or  
"this other team here," they played the game everywhere,  
and wherever they went, any neighborhood of baseball was  
home.

They played this game, baseball,

Some played to get out of the barrio, and they did, to USC,  
UCLA or Oxy,  
The endless maze of minor league cities, the distant home-  
land of Mexico,  
One or two even played in the "show," the major leagues,  
only a few, but they opened windows and doors along the  
way for other generations to come.

They were present, but did not call attention to themselves.

Yet all one had to do to was look a little further east,  
toward the hills and hoyos and 'hoods in East LA,  
Gaze outward to the vast Inland Empire, in Colton and San  
Berdu.  
Look a little South to the small patches of barrios in Orange  
County,  
See all the way down El Camino Real to the far corners of San  
Diego.

They played this game, baseball.

The played with the dignity of Bob Laguna's pioneer struggle,  
The grace and style found in the journey of Saul Toledo,  
They played with pride, seen in the fire of Armando Perez,  
They played with style and skill of the great Chilo Herrera  
They played with joy, still there in the still twinkled eyes  
and gruff laughter of Al Padilla, the beaming grin of Art Ve-  
larde

They made their own legends, before Fernandomania and  
Nomar.  
The Nine Pena Brothers, the feisty dedication of Shorty Perez,  
the enduring Chayo Rodriguez, the presence of Danny  
Carrasco.

They played this game baseball.

They didn't wait to take their place, they went out and made  
their own history,  
They played in a parallel universe, a shadow game, but alive  
and real, and true.  
They became more American by playing the game, and they  
made the game more Mexican-American because they played  
it their way; they played with love.  
They were true amateurs, "lovers" of the game; they played  
this game, baseball, con corazon.

Their legacy is recorded in old black and white photos or fad-  
ed clippings, worn out spikes, gloves and uniforms, dusty tro-  
phies, and faded color and sepia brown snapshots of young  
men, now old, once just boys, playing this game, baseball.

But baseball is a game that demands timelessness, it is  
measured against all before it, the present with the past. So  
our heroes gather, and call each other out -- "that kid over  
here, he could hit," "that young fellow there, he was a good  
player." Their time has come, and gone, but their memory  
lives on in our history,  
a re-discovered past.

They played this game, baseball.

Not to prove they were better than,  
nor to rail against being overlooked,  
but they played this game, baseball, with love,  
and they were as good as, no more, no less.

They played on Sundays, all day.  
They played in parks and sandlots, on fields of grass and dirt,  
They played on weekends, and work nights,  
and all year round, in the heat and the cold.

*They played this game, baseball.*



## **Latino Baseball History Project Membership**

**Player - \$50**

**Coach - \$100**

**Manager - \$250**

**If you are interested in  
becoming a member,  
please contact Iwona  
Contreras at 909-537-3447,  
e-mail [icontr@csusb.edu](mailto:icontr@csusb.edu)  
or visit our website.**



## **MARK YOUR CALENDARS - THE LBHP HAS A FULL SCHEDULE THIS SEASON!**

### **Saturday, Oct. 6, 2012, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Book Signing**

Westminister Gardens  
Santa Domingo Ave.  
Duarte, CA 91010

### **Oct. 27, 2012, 1 p.m.-5 p.m. Book Signing**

9459 Birmingham Ave.  
Riverside, CA 92509

### **Saturday, Nov. 3, 2012, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Book Signing**

2141 West Adams Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90018

John M. Frau Library  
Cal State San Bernardino  
5500 University Parkway  
San Bernardino, CA 92407